GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2778
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2007
ARSENIC POLLUTION DISEASES
Deshmukh Shri Subhash Sureshchandra

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a rapid increase in the diseases caused by arsenic pollution in the country, particularly in the tribal and backward areas of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the concrete measures taken by the Union Government to check the diseases caused by arsenic pollution including the measures taken with foreign assistance, if any, received in this regard;

(d) whether the State Governments had requested the Union Government to allocate funds for the above purpose;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the action taken by the Union Government in this regard including the funds provided to the State Government during the last three years, State-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a) to (f): Incidents of arsenic contamination of groundwater are increasingly coming to light due to increased awareness and investigation. The cause of arsenic contamination is geogenic only. Arsenic contamination has been reported from West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The year-wise details alongwith the names of affected districts are at annexure. Prolonged use of arsenic contaminated water for drinking causes diseases like arsenicosis, dermatosis, keratosis, conjuctivities, bronchitis and gastro enteritis etc. Measures have been taken by the State Governments for diagnosis and treatment of patients affected by such diseases.

Drinking water supply is a State subject and the Central Government is providing technical and financial assistance under Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme. 15% of these funds allotted to State Government under the programme are specifically earmarked for tackling water quality problems. Since 1998, the State Government of West Bengal has reported sanction of 10 sub-mission projects at the cost of Rs.4479.49 lakh with Central share of Rs.33596.62 lakh.